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A Controversial Interpretation of the δίδου Form The Opinions of Contemporary Linguists and the Forms of the Second Person Singular of *imperativi praesentis medii-passivi* of the Verb δίδωμι as Found in the Poetry of Ancient Greece of Archaic and Classical Period

Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse the δίδου form, which is regarded by two contemporary scholars to be the poetic form of present imperative middle and passive. The paper presents opinions of Herodian, an ancient grammarian, as well as those of modern linguists researching the behaviour of intervocalic sigma in -σο suffix of present imperative middle and passive. The critical analysis of those opinions has been contrasted with the forms present in the poetry of archaic and classical period.

Key words: δίδωμι verb, -σο ending, Greek poetry

The σ spirant occurring between vowels would usually disappear. According to modern linguists, in the forms of second person singular of *indicativi praesentis medii-passivi*, *indicativi imperfecti medii-passivi* and *imperativi praesentis medii-passivi* of verbs with athematic conjugation, the spirant was restored by way of analogy (e.g. τίθεσαι, ἐτίθεσο, τίθεσο or ἵστασαι, ἵστασο). The sigma also used to disappear but was reintroduced by way of analogy in forms of perfect indicative and pluperfect middle and passive.¹

¹ K. Brugmann: *Griechische Grammatik: Lautlehre, Stammbildungs- und Flexionslehre, Syntax*. München 1913, p. 405; J. Niemirska-Pliszczyńska: Ἴδὸν ὁ ἄνθρωπος. *Ecce homo*:

Herodian, a grammarian who lived in 2nd century AD also observed that the -μι verbs take the -σο suffix in present imperative middle and passive.

καὶ πάλιν ἐδίδων ἐδίδως ἐδίδω καὶ τὸ προστακτικὸν δίδοθι εἰς θι λήγει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐδιδόμεν ἐδίδοσο δίδοσο ὁμοιοκαταλήκτως. καὶ πάλιν ἴστην ἴστης ἴστη καὶ τὸ προστακτικὸν ἴσταθι εἰς θι λήγει, καὶ ἰστάμεν ἴστασο τὸ προστακτικὸν ὁμοιοκαταλήκτως. καὶ πάλιν ἐπήγνυν ἐπήγνυς ἐπήγνυ καὶ τὸ προστακτικὸν πήγνυθι εἰς θι λήγει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπηγνόμεν ἐπήγνυσο πήγνυσο ὁμοιοκαταλήκτως.²

“Also ἐδίδων ἐδίδως ἐδίδω and the imperative δίδοθι ends with -θι, but ἐδιδόμεν ἐδίδοσο δίδοσο have a similar ending. On the other hand, ἴστην ἴστης ἴστη and the imperative ἴσταθι end with -θι, and ἰστάμεν ἴστασο has the imperative with a similar ending. Furthermore, ἐπήγνυν ἐπήγνυς ἐπήγνυ and the imperative πήγνυθι end with -θι, and also ἐπηγνόμεν ἐπήγνυσο πήγνυσο have similar endings.”

These forms according to the scholars are regular (they also occur in Homer)³ and any irregularities are rare.⁴ The exceptions are Homeric forms where intervocalic sigma disappears without contraction (imperative ἴσταο, παρίσταο, imperfect ἐμάρναο),⁵ verbs in present indicative middle and passive with a chang-

wstępny podręcznik języka greckiego oparty na tekstach autorów klasycznych i Nowego Testamentu. Poznań 1960, p. 87; M. Auerbach, M. Golias: *Gramatyka grecka*. Warszawa 1962, p. 99; O. Jurewicz: *Gramatyka historyczna języka greckiego*. Warszawa 1992, pp. 221, 247; A.L. Sihler: *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*. New York 1995, p. 476; M. Auerbach, M. Golias: *Gramatyka grecka*. Warszawa 2000, p. 163. According to Smyth the σ in the Ionic dialect remains unchanged in the imperative: τίθεσο Thgn. 1096, ἐπίστασο Hdt. VII 39, 209 (H.W. Smyth: *The Sounds and Inflections of the Greek Dialects: Ionic Dialect*. Oxford 1894, pp. 479, 581).

² *Grammatici Graeci*. Pars 3: *Herodiani technici reliquiae*. Collegit, disposuit, emendavit, explicavit, praefatus est A. Lentz. Vol. 2, fasc. 2 scripta de nominibus, verbis, pronominiibus, adverbis et librum monadicorum continens. Lipsiae 1867, pp. 25–30, 820.

³ K. Brugmann: *Griechische Grammatik*..., p. 405; E. Schwyzer: *Griechische Grammatik*. Bd. 1. München 1939, p. 668. Seymour believes that in Homer the σ in the -σο ending remains unchanged only in the imperative, e.g. in ἴστασο form (T.D. Seymour: *Introduction to the Language and Verse of Homer*. Boston 1902, p. 69).

⁴ W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar*. Boston 1900, p. 135; E. Fiderer: *Gramatyka języka greckiego – szkolna*. Cz. 1. Lwów–Warszawa 1920, p. 94; E. Schwyzer: *Griechische Grammatik*..., p. 799; H.W. Smyth: *Greek Grammar*. Rev. by G. M. Messing. Cambridge, MA 1956, pp. 155, 205; O. Jurewicz: *Gramatyka historyczna języka greckiego*..., p. 227; A. Cardinale: *I Greci e noi: grammatica*. Napoli 1993, pp. 344, 345.

⁵ D.B. Monro: *A Grammar of the Homeric Dialect*. Oxford 1882, p. 4; W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar*..., p. 172; T.D. Seymour: *Introduction to the Language and Verse of Homer*..., p. 69; E. Schwyzer: *Griechische Grammatik*..., p. 668; H.W. Smyth: *Greek Grammar*..., pp. 154, 207.

ing into e which occurs in Herodotus (e.g. ἐξεπίσται),⁶ poetic forms of present imperative middle and passive of verbs where ασο had contracted into ω (e.g. ἴστω)⁷ and where εσο had contracted into ου (e.g. τίθου)⁸ as well as the form δίδου noted by only two scholars.⁹

The δίδου form is a regular active form of the imperative resulting from the contraction of ο and ε. Some modern linguists regard it to be also present imperative middle and passive, although it is the form δίδοσο which is considered to be the regular attic form. According to this interpretation, δίδου would be the result of contraction of two ο: δίδου < δίδοσο. Such is the opinion of Smyth and Goodwin¹⁰ not supported by any other scholar. They believe the form to occur in poetry, and additionally, Smyth considers it a late form. Smyth's opinion might be based on the forms which can be found in Galen. In *De remediis parabilibus* (Gal. XIV, p. 372, 12) we can find a contracted δίδου form which may be considered middle when taking into account the regular form of present imperative middle and passive δίδοσο occurring in the same sentence:

[...] δίδου ψυχροῦ ὕδατος καταπίνειν ἐκ διαλειμμάτων, καὶ εἰ μὲν παρηγοροῖτο τοῦτο, αὐτὸς ἀνακτησάμενος τροφήν δίδοσο.

“[...] drink some cold water from time to time (literally: give yourself a drink) and, if it alleviates (the pain) when you recover eat your fill (literally: give yourself some food).”

In this case the subject is both the doer of the activity and its object. Most probably it is the only example of δίδοσο imperative in preserved texts. There are considerably more examples of δίδου form. It is difficult to establish whether among them there are those regarded by Smyth and Goodwin as poetic middle forms as the scholars fail to provide information regarding their place of occurrence.

The δίδου form can be found in Homer in *Homeric Hymns*, in Theognis, Anacreon, in tragedy and in Aristophanes:¹¹

⁶ H.W. Smyth: *The Sounds and Inflections of the Greek Dialects: Ionic Dialect...*, p. 574; W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 172.

⁷ W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 164; E. Schwyzer: *Griechische Grammatik...*, p. 688; Smyth 1956, p. 155; Eur. *Rh.* 685; Aristoph. *Ec.* 737.

⁸ W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 164; E. Schwyzer: *Griechische Grammatik...*, p. 688; H.W. Smyth: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 155; Aesch. *Eum.* 226.

⁹ W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 164; H.W. Smyth: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 155.

¹⁰ W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 164; H.W. Smyth: *Greek Grammar...*, p. 155.

¹¹ Analysis based on editions such as: *Homeri Opera*. Recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit T.W. Allen. Vols. 3–4. Oxonii 1958 (1908); *Greek Lyric II: Anacreon, Anacreontea, Choral Lyric from Olympus to Alcman*. Edited and translated by D.A. Campbell. Cambridge, MA 2006 (1988); *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati I-II*. Ed. M.L. West. Oxford 1998; *Aeschyli tragoediae*. Ed. M.L. West. Leipzig 1990; Sophocles: *Antigone*. Ed. M. Griffith. Cambridge 2007 (1999); Euripides: *Medea*. Ed. with introduction and commentary by D.L. Page. Oxford

- ἀντὰρ ἔπειτ' ἄλλοισι δίδου χαρίεσσιν ἀμοιβήν (Hom. *Od.* III 58)
 “And then give the rest a generous pay”
 [...] Διὸς υἱέ: δίδου δ' ἀρετήν τε καὶ ὄλβον (*h.* 15, 9)
 “[...] the son of Zeus, give us fame and prosperity”
 Ἄλλ' ἴληθ' Ἥφαιστε δίδου δ' ἀρετήν τε καὶ ὄλβον (*h.* 20, 8)
 “Be kind, Hephaestus, give us fame and prosperity”
 Πρόφρων, Ἀργυρότοξε, δίδου χάριν Αἰσχύλου νύφ (Anth. *Pal.* VI 137, 1)
 “The well-meaning, with a silver bow, do the son of Aeschylus a favour”
 [...] σὺ δέ μοι κλῦθι καὶ ἐσθλὰ δίδου (Thgn. 4)
 “[...] hear me out and give me wealth”
 [...] ἐμοὶ δὲ δίδου χάριν [...] (Thgn. 1303)
 “do me a favour”
 [...] αἵρεσίν τ' ἐμοὶ δίδου (Aesch. *Pr.* 779)
 “[...] give me a choice”
 ἐπίλυσιν φόβων, ἐπίλυσιν δίδου (Aesch. *Th.* 132)
 “free me from fear, set me free”
 Ἄλλ' εἴκε, θυμῷ καὶ μετὰστασιν δίδου (Soph. *Ant.* 718)
 “Yield and forget your rage”
 [...] μὴδ' ἡμῖν δίδου (Eur. *Med.* 617)
 “[...] and do not give to us”
 [...] σῶζε, μὴ δίδου τάδε (Eur. *Med.* 961)
 “[...] keep, do not give”
 [...] δίδου δὲ χεῖρ' ὑπηρέτη φίλῳ (Eur. *HF.* 1398)
 “[...] give your helping hand to your assistant and friend”
δίδου δέρη σὴν χεῖρ' [...] (Eur. *HF.* 1402)
 “put your arm around the neck [...]”
 [...] τῷδε μὲν δέλτον δίδου (Eur. *IT.* 603)
 “[...] give him the letter”
 [...] δυσγενὲς μὴδὲν δίδου (Eur. *Hel.* 1259)
 “[...] do not give anything cheap”
 ἐμοὶ σὺ τῶν σῶν, Μενέλεως, μὴδὲν δίδου (Eur. *Or.* 642)
 “and you Menelaus, do not give me anything of yours”
 [...] μεθ' ἡμῶν τῷ θεῷ τιμὴν δίδου (Eur. *Ba.* 342)
 “[...] worship the god together with us”
 Ἀπόφερ', ἀπόφερε τὰ κρέα καὶ μὴ μοι δίδου (Aristoph. *Ach.* 1054)
 “Take, take the meat away and do not give it to me”
 Ταῦτ', ὦ πολυτίμητ', εὐχομένοις ἡμῖν δίδου (Aristoph. *Pax* 1016)
 “the honourable lady, give onto us who pray”

1988 ('1938); Euripides: *Fabulae*. Ed. G. Murray. Vol. 2. Oxford 1913; Euripides: *Iphigenia Aulidensis*. Ed. H.C. Günther. Leipzig 1988; Euripides: *Helen*. Ed. with introduction and commentary by A.M. Dale. London 2004 ('1981); Euripides: *Bacchae*. Ed. with introduction and commentary by E.R. Dodds. Oxford 1944; Aristophanes: *Acharnians*. Ed. with introduction and commentary by S.D. Olson. Oxford 2002; *Aristophanis comoediae*. Vols. 1–2. Eds. F.W. Hallet, W.M. Geldart. Oxonii 1907; Euripides: *The Cyclops*. Ed. with introduction, notes and vocabulary by D.M. Simmonds and R.R. Timberlake. London–Cambridge 2002 ('1927).

Μή μοι μὴ προσδίδου (Eur. Cyc. 361)
 “No, do not give to me”

The verb δίδωμι “I give” represents a three argument predicate: who gives, gives what, gives to whom.

The sentence indicates a reflexive diathesis if the first and the second argument are referentially identical. The subject is then also the object of the action e.g. δίδομαι “I give myself.”

There is also an indirect reflexive middle which indicates that the subject does the action in his own interest, e.g. δίδομαι “I give to myself,” “I give to myself in my own interest” or “I give (something) of mine.” Such type of middle occurs in the fragment of Gelen’s *De remediis parabilibus* quoted above: δίδου (σεαυτῷ) καταπίνειν “give yourself a drink,” τροφήν δίδοσο “give yourself some food.” The subject does that for himself/herself, for his/her own benefit. The first part of the sentence does not inform in whose interest the subject acts, the second part has the same verb in middle form. Taking the context into account as well as the δίδοσο form we may assume that the δίδου form here is most probably a middle form and the subject acts in his own interest.

Other types of middle are reciprocal and dynamic. Reciprocal middle expresses an action which at least two subject direct at each other, e.g. δίδοσθαι “to give to each other.” Dynamic middle indicates that the subject is actively (either mentally or physically) engaged in performing the activity.¹²

In none of the sentences quoted above does the context of the verb δίδου correspond with the context of the sentence found in Galen. The second argument of the predicate in given positions is not identical with the first. Mostly they are requests, and the performed action is not supposed to bring the subject any benefit. Only the δίδου forms found in Euripides (Eur. *HF*. 1398, 1402, Eur. *Or*. 642, Eur. *Med*. 617) can be considered middle. The subject in those sentences does not give anything to himself/herself but he/she gives something of his/her (e.g. his/her hand), so this would be an example of indirect reflexive middle.¹³ To regard these form as middle would confirm the Godwin and Smyth’s claim that they occur in poetry (although I have not analysed prose). It is difficult to explain, however, why those poets did not use the attic δίδοσο (metre might have played a part) and why they are not analysed by other modern scholars.

¹² W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar*..., p. 267; H.W. Smyth: *Greek Grammar*..., pp. 390–392; M. Auerbach-M. Golias: *Gramatyka grecka*..., pp. 75, 181.

¹³ Goodwin gives an example of middle participle in the first book of *Illiad*: ἤλθε [...] / λυσόμενός τε θυγάτρα (Hom. *Il*. I 13) “he has arrived [...] / to free his daughter [...]” (W.W. Goodwin: *Greek Grammar*..., p. 267).